NOAA's North Atlantic Region

As the most populous region in the nation, the North Atlantic has significant residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and energy related activities that stress natural resources, increase potential use conflicts, and impact communities and their residents.

Geography and Environment

The North Atlantic region extends from Maine to Virginia and encompasses the coastlines of 11 states, as well as Pennsylvania. It is characterized by several large scale geographic features including the Gulf of Maine and Cape Cod Bay and estuarine systems including Long Island Sound, New York Bight, Delaware Bay and Chesapeake Bay. The geology includes rocky shorelines, wetlands, and beach/dune complexes as well as significant barrier island systems with extensive intertidal and freshwater wetland complexes, and low lying sandy coastal plains.

Social and Economic Context

The North Atlantic hosts some of the Nation's largest metropolitan areas and ports, with significant projected increases in maritime transportation. The region has commercial and recreational fishing industries as well as coastal dependant tourism. The region includes 180 coastal counties (and the District of Columbia) constituting 40% of the total land area, and 77% of its population. The North Atlantic has four of the Nation's ten largest metropolitan areas, three of the top five U.S. ports (value of fish landed) and five of the Nation's top 20 ports (international cargo volume).

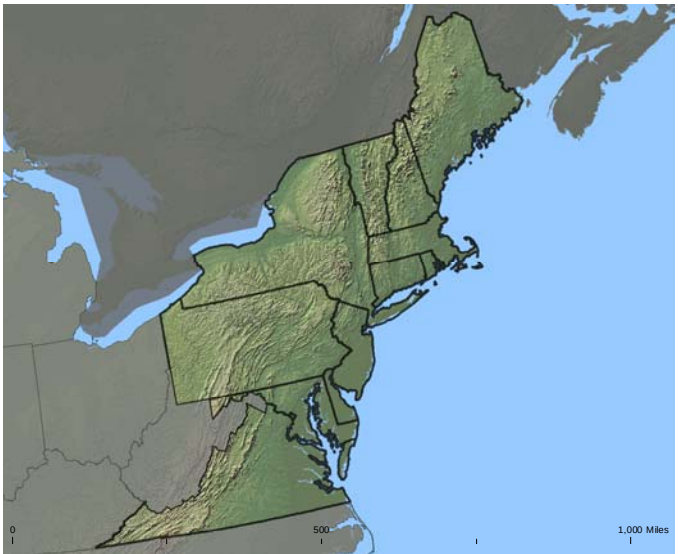
Capabilities and Challenges

NOAA's regional work is done in concert with a host of governmental and non-governmental partners, ensuring we apply the full suite of NOAA capabilities to address the environmental challenges of the North Atlantic region. Focusing and integrating these capabilities in the North Atlantic region will improve our ability to provide products and services to our constituents.

Increasing coastal population and attendant societal activities (e.g., tourism, recreation, fishing, transportation, navigation, energy development, etc.) result in over fishing, degradation of coastal and ocean ecosystems, and use conflicts. NOAA and its key partners have science, assessment, monitoring and prediction, tool development, management, eduacation and outreach programs that support resource conservation can assist in conserving resources and resolution of these use conflicts.

Greater coastal populations also increase the vulnerability of people, structures and economies to hazards including hurricanes and nor'easters. Climate change will place additional areas at risk due to coastal storm surge, flooding, sea level rise, salt water intrusion, and changes to temperature and precipitation extremes. Over 1,000 square miles along the Northeast coast are threatened by a predicted 20-inch rise in sea level by the end of this century. NOAA capabilities to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to these hazards include: weather, marine and riverine forecasting; emergency management and response; coastal land use planning and management, monitoring and prediction of oceanic and atmospheric changes; and ocean observing system expertise among others.

NOAA's resources and expertise can help address these critical environmental challenges while transferring valuable lessons learned to other regions facing similar challenges.



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